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VIEWS AND EXPERIENCE

IN RELATION TO

ENTIRE CONSECRATION

AND THE

SECOND ADVENT:

ADDRESSED TO THE MINISTERS OF THE PORTS-
MOUTH, N. H., BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

BY F. G. BROWN,

LATE PASTOR OF THE MIDDLE STREET BAPTIST CHURCH,
PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

BOSTON:

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AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

TO THE

MINISTERS OF THE PORTSMOUTH, N. H.,
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I. VIEWS AND EXPERIENCE IN RELATION TO ENTIRE CONSECRATION.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN :

It is not in my power to visit you personally, as it would give me great pleasure to do : nor am I able to write you individually ; you will therefore accept of this narrative, as especially prepared for yourselves.

I feel a great satisfaction in making this narration to you, brethren, because I have so long enjoyed your confidence and your love. You know me ; and I believe still, as ever, you will candidly consider what I will now lay before you.—At our Quarterly Ministerial Conferences, it has been one of our usual exercises to communicate to each other God's dealings with us since we parted : and now, brethren, as I do not expect to be present at your next session, let this speak in my behalf. I make this narration from no other motive, than that the grace of God may be magnified, and the power of his Spirit be demonstrated. Let me premise that you are yourselves, brethren, enjoying much of God's presence, that prayer is your delight,

and communion with God more to you than your daily food; that you know of the truths of our holy religion which you preach, by a powerful experience. And again, let me believe that you will not hastily reject what I declare that God has done for my soul, merely because you may never have seen and felt the same. I only ask that you will impartially and prayerfully ponder upon these things, and endeavor to ascertain whether the hand of the Lord be in them. Let me not believe that you will limit the Almighty, or that you will set up yourselves as judges of what it might be wisdom in him to perform. On the assumption that we are all living in the very last days, that which I have of late experienced is very easily accounted for. I shall lay my whole heart open to you, brethren, feeling confident, that, however unintelligible, and even silly, the exposure might be to some, you will commend me, at least, for my honesty, and be disposed to put the most favorable construction upon what I may say.

The month of August last will mark more particularly the period in which my mind seems to have been conscious of any peculiarity of exercises. Ever since I commenced my pastoral labors, I have been aware that something was wanting to stimulate Christians to a life of constant faith and prayer, and to give to the great machinery by which light and salvation are propelled throughout

the earth an increase of power. But it was at this time that I began to look about, and to realize, as never before, the apathy of the church in regard to evangelizing the world, &c. My soul fervently responded to the call made for a convention at Worcester, for the purpose of deliberation and prayer in regard to the *neglected* cause of missions; but circumstances prevented my attendance on that occasion. At our Association, which occurred shortly after, I felt called upon, with others, to entreat the churches to pity, and to send relief to the poor heathen; and expressed my heartfelt regret that I had not obeyed what once appeared to be my duty, and become myself a missionary. From all that I noticed, it seemed to me as though the whole American church were in a profound slumber on this subject; and I naturally inferred that vital piety must be at a corresponding ebb. From looking abroad, I came nearer home, and compared my own church with what I understood to be the condition of the churches of our own Association, relative to missions, and to the private duties of the Christian: and I found that my own people were in the advance of most other churches, as to all that gives dignity, beauty, and life to the Christian character. But still I saw a great lack among many of them. From my own dear church I turned to myself, and found that my own piety would probably

suffer in comparison with that of some of my flock. I began to review my past life, and especially the few years of my ministry. This review awakened within me humility and pain. I knew that I could not be condemned for the want of severe intellectual labor, preparatory to the weekly performances of the pulpit—for it had always been my rule not to fail here, though I might as a pastor: but I could detect some unhallowed motives which had too long prompted my ministerial labors;—a lack of confidence in God to own and bless the word preached,—of faith in prayer,—of nearness to God,—of bold and soul-moving conceptions of God, of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. I had always, from the time of my conversion, which was at the age of fourteen years, frequented my closet daily, and had enjoyed a measure of religion. But it was not until I entered the ministry, that I knew what it was to suppress youthful effervescence of feeling, and to govern self with the sternness of manhood: it was not until the holiness of my calling began to meet me, that I really began to walk with God. I now see by casting my eye over the MSS. of the sermons which I have preached since Sept. 1st, how my hungerings after the living God have been steadily increasing; and also the steps which I unconsciously took to bring me out where I found myself at the opening of this memorable year. I had tried to implore God to

arouse the slumberings of the churches to an increase of zeal, of sacrifice, and of prayer in behalf of a perishing world; that he would in mercy revive religion in the midst of my own dear people, where it had so long languished, but especially that my own soul might experience more of the power of religion. We had not enjoyed a season of refreshing from on high for a long time, and I had begun to feel that God had nothing more for me to do where I was then located. After having labored on until I felt that I had exhausted all the means in my power towards effecting a change for the better, or in bringing about the conversion of souls, I began to cry to God to send some servant of his to my relief. I felt willing to stand aside to any one whom Providence should select for this work. In desiring a revival of religion, my own soul was hoping to share in its precious fruits. I had been accustomed, for a few years past, to spend a portion of my time daily in reading memoirs of pious individuals, and other religious books, such as would have a tendency to feed the flame of piety in my soul: but I never dreamed that it was in my power to attain to eminence in piety; supposing either that I had not begun early enough in life, or that there was some moral constitutional defect about me which would render it impossible. Often have I read of the holy ecstasies, and the triumphant faith, and the heavenly devotion of Payson, and

Taylor, and Edwards, and many others, and thought that they were religious prodigies; and of course few could hope to be like them. I had heard of some around me who had had the power of God upon them to such a degree, as to lose their natural strength: but I had always doubted and strenuously opposed such things as realities. I ever deprecated all excitements, and preferred a religion that would give exercise and expansion to the reason and to the imagination. And yet whenever, which indeed was very seldom, I found myself in a meeting where much religious fervor was exhibited, my own soul would awaken and kindle up with holy fire.

On the fourth of January last, a ministering brother having come to my aid, a series of religious meetings were begun in the vestry of our church. No extra preparations or parade were made on this occasion: it had not even been announced that a protracted meeting was contemplated. As the coming of our brother among us was remarkably providential, I was watching for further indications of our Father's will as to the measures which should be used towards a revival of his work. On the following evening, the theme of our brother's discourse was Prayer: during the sermon, I noticed no very special interest among the people, nor did I feel any very strong emotions of soul myself, as a result of the discourse. Still I felt that the subject chosen was well timed,

and at its conclusion knelt, earnestly desiring to lift unto God the effectual, fervent prayer which availeth much. No sooner had I bent my knee before God, than my soul was at once drawn out in inexpressible agony for the outpourings of the Spirit, and that God would come down among us in great majesty. Immediately I was conscious of feelings which I cannot better describe, than by likening them to the effect of electricity, passing through my whole physical system: the veil which had separated me from my God was now entirely torn away, my heart flowed out like water to Him in whose immediate presence, as never before, I now seemed to be. Having risen from my knees, I found the audience all bathed in tears, and a most awful solemnity pervading the house. I began to speak; first, inquiring who had been praying for me: and next, declaring, with great emphasis, that now God was going to bless us, and that my *soul* was evidence to it. I then proceeded to remark that it appeared to me as though our prayers had all been poor, murmuring, repining, fretting prayers—that we had not taken God at his word, and believed him to be liberally disposed unto his children—we had not presumed upon his generosity and asked him to do great things for us. I expressed my views in regard to myself thus:—That it appeared as if I had never prayed as I ought; that I had been in Jeremiah's dungeon all my life; that I had

not had a place where to stand large enough for the sole of my foot; that I had just emerged from a dreary wilderness, into a vast and boundless field where all was beauty, and loveliness and glory. Such peace, joy and confidence now took possession of my soul as I cannot describe. Having resumed my seat, and finding myself variously affected with involuntary emotions of joy and of grief, and being still sensible of this holy celestial influence to such an extent, that every limb and joint in my body trembled, I became alarmed, and inquired of my ministering brother, who was sitting at my side, if he could tell me what it was that was then on me; or if he had ever seen an individual affected in like manner. As the time drew near for the conclusion of the meeting, I felt loth to leave the desk, and to mingle with the brethren, apprehensive that what I had been enjoying might be a delusion, and even though it were, I desired never to lose it. But what was my surprise, as I left my seat, to find that still my soul was filled with inexpressible pleasure, and for the first time in my life I cried out,—“glory! glory!” and immediately sunk down, unable to stand upon my feet. I was sensible that I had never prayed for such heavenly manifestations as these, and on inquiry, soon ascertained to whose prayers I was probably indebted for what I was then enjoying. Again I felt a reluctance to leave the pre-

cious place of our worship, and then to enter the door of my residence, lest all these glorious emotions, and indescribable views of heaven, should vanish. Having arrived home, I gave myself up for a few hours to earnest and agonizing prayer, and to exalted praise and thanksgiving to God. My soul was filled with deepest agony for all who were preaching lies and false doctrine, and with faith and confidence in God, that he would hear my supplications, and now begin a mighty work of grace in our midst. Such peace and glory as I now felt for eight and forty hours, human language cannot portray: heaven had come down to earth, and I had such bliss and transports, as I had never expected to realize even in the world of glory! I wanted an angel's powers, and an angel's trumpet, to make known all and to all just what my soul felt and beheld. I retired to rest on that night, and awoke in the enjoyment of the same celestial peace, and spent the day in weeping and rejoicing before God, in view of what he had done for so unworthy a creature of the dust as myself, and in exchanging sympathies and congratulations with Christian friends who called to see me.

It was intimated by one dear sister, who called at this time, that I had experienced the blessing of sanctification: the suggestion startled me for a moment, and made me shudder, supposing that she meant to inti-

mate that I was now perfect. I replied by remarking that I hardly knew what name to give to what I had experienced; but should I select terms that would seem to me to imply just and only just that of which I was then conscious, they would be these:—the baptism of the Holy Ghost—entire consecration—perfect love. These had always before been very odious terms to my ear; odious, only because they were used by a party or sect of Christians whom I regarded as exceedingly superstitious and fanatical. But I now felt that it was due to my God, and to the sovereign power of his grace, to own that he had baptized me with the Holy Ghost. I now felt the purest and strongest affection for all who were truly Christians, irrespective of names or of denomination. My sectarian feelings had all fled like dew before the sun, and I wanted to mingle at once with God's dear children, however poor or despised they might be, to unite my prayers and songs with theirs, and to tell them what wonderful things God had done for my soul. I saw that I had made an idol of my denomination, and had been too distrustful of the piety of other sects, and too jealous of their prosperity. My books and authors, that had yielded me so much intellectual delight, were now to me as chaff; they appeared as if sealed up, never again to be opened; everything earthly which I had fondly called mine, had fled away, and appeared to me, as at this mo-

ment, of no more value than a bubble. A desire for distinction, the love of reputation, of honor, pride, were all gone, and I felt as though I loved God supremely, and that I could now not only *reckon*, but *feel* that I was dead indeed unto the world, and alive unto God. I preferred to be taken out of the world; yes, to suffer ten thousand deaths, rather than to fall back and live where I had been living for the past years of my life. O, what a sense of condemnation and guilt! how terrible God! how hard to bear Christ's yoke! how anxious and distressed about the church, about poor godless men, and about numberless earthly things, all of which should have been left entirely with God! How many times I have looked forward with joyful anticipations to *death*, which would end all this strife. I supposed that in these things, however, was the conflict of the Christian, and he must submit to them as a part of his warfare. But of no grace was I now more conscious, than that of humility. I felt like a young convert, child-like, weak, ignorant, and willing to be taught by any one who could tell me more about what I had experienced, and who would take me by the hand, and lead me into all truth. I could see that God had opened my eyes wonderfully, but still I felt as though there was much more for me to learn—that there was some truth undiscovered, and into the knowledge of which the Holy Spirit was de-

signing to lead me. These convictions I expressed to a ministering brother, who called to visit me on the day succeeding the one on which I had been so greatly blest; and O, how my soul yearned for some kind hand to lead me! I was inclined to suppose that I did not have a clear and full knowledge of the doctrine of holiness, and that it was some unpenetrated part of this grand Scripture truth into which I was yet to be introduced.

I now received, without a sneer, or any feelings of contempt, the Guide to Christian Perfection. I devoured with avidity perhaps twenty numbers of this precious little work, and was highly gratified to find that there were so many Christians, of all denominations, who had had an experience precisely like my own; and, moreover, how greatly was my joy increased, to find that I could read my experience in the book of the Acts—that God had given me the experience of the primitive Christians, so that I could now know what they meant by “joy unspeakable and full of glory!” There was, I could discover, however, a lack of *faith* in my experience, of which others, who had been blest like myself, seemed to be better acquainted than I was. I wanted that faith, so as to grasp all God’s promises as mine—so as to cry continually Abba, Father! and so as to make Jesus *my* Savior. With particular reference to this end, I searched the Bible, in order to gain still clearer and more correct

views of God, of Christ, and of the Spirit. Soon I began to behold God as a being full of love, and who could have nothing but love for those who walked uprightly. I beheld Christ as my Savior, who died for me as though I had been the only sinner in the universe; as my Priest, who had passed within the veil to make atonement for my sins; as my Mediator, who stood between me and the flaming sword of justice, and thus shielded me from destruction. I saw him as my elder brother; I looked at all the terms which were expressive of his endearment for his disciples; I contemplated him, on earth never turning away any suppliant for temporal or spiritual favors, and even suffering a beloved disciple to indulge in the familiarity of reclining on his bosom; and I reasoned thus: he is the very same Jesus now; he is the Savior of all, especially of them that believe; why should he not love me, and do for me far above all that I can ask, or even think, if I will but yield to him, and fully believe in him? I labored to bring him near to me, and to conceive of him just as he was when he left earth for heaven. It was not long ere I could feel that he had made me truly one of his; he was present with me in my place of meditation and prayer; and again I was humbled in the dust at his feet, and could cry out—"My Lord, and my God!" I could now live by faith, day by day, on the love of God, with-

out one care or solicitude for the morrow ; the Bible became my only book of study, the Spirit of truth my only expositor. Indeed, I had a new Bible, a new Savior, and a new heart ; and what was remarkable, I could now preach, for the first time in my life, without the aid of written sermons.

My investigations went on in regard to sanctification ; I searched the Bible with reference to it ; and then read Fletcher, Bramwell, Wesley, and others on the subject, until I was well satisfied, that, speculate as we might, and dispute about terms as we would, the doctrine of holiness was a most prominent doctrine of the Bible, and that it was the duty and the privilege of Christians to arrive at a state, to say the least, of *conscious* purity ; to be where our hearts condemn us not ; that we might have confidence toward God. I do not use the term Perfection ; not because I have myself much difficulty with that expression, but because it is liable to be misunderstood. Entire consecration is less objectionable. My *experience* on this subject is now better to me than all my theorizing ever was. Six months ago, an angel might have reasoned with me, and I should have almost doubted whether Christians, at the present day, could enjoy such influences, experience such overwhelming emotions of soul, have such bright and glorious views of truth, and be so sanctified unto God. What I have experienced, brethren, is only what

others have, and are experiencing all over the land. Converts, and Christians who have long been on their way to the heavenly Canaan, have alike been filled with the great power of God, as on the day of Pentecost.

After having obtained such new light on the Scriptures, and enjoyed such remarkable manifestations of the Spirit of God, I felt most deeply for you, my beloved brethren, and for all the ministers of Christ, that all who were called to minister at the altar might have the same power of God resting down upon them, so that their own souls might be refreshed, and that they might perform the duties of their office with more ease and delight. I beheld them toiling and weeping over the souls that were committed to their charge, and I longed to tell them how they might cast all upon God, and get such an anointing from on high as would give effect to all their ministrations. It appeared to me, that the great majority of them were in gross darkness. I wrestled and agonized in prayer for them; and O, how distressed was my soul for an inactive and slumbering church! I can now see that my distress was caused by something beside the discovery of the fact, that the doctrine of holiness had not a strong hold on the hearts of ministers and people. So important did the doctrine of sanctification appear to me, and I could see so vividly, as I thought, its connection with the conversion of the world, that I felt it

might soon be my duty to go forth and make this the great theme of my preaching to the churches, or to devote the remnant of my life to the work of an evangelist, endeavoring to labor for Christ on a more extensive scale than ever. For it seemed to me that all my sympathies, and prayers, and toils, had been criminally restricted. As I had no tie to earth, and love for distinction had gone, I found that I had no sacrifice to make, but that toil, privation and suffering would be a pleasure, for Christ's sake. I was willing to be accounted a fool for my Master, and to bear with patience any reproach or persecution in defence of the gospel. I had always before thought much of preserving my good name, and enjoying the commendations of the community for my urbanity, frankness and inoffensiveness; and I here confess that the greatest injury that an individual could once have done me, would have been to speak ill of me. But now, blessed be God, while conscious of serving him who has redeemed me with his most precious blood, I care but little whether I have the approbation or the disapprobation of the world. I am now kept in perfect peace, while my whole soul is stayed on God. I sometimes feel as though I could stand unmoved amidst the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds: such confidence has my soul in the omnipotent arm of my Father and my God. Dear brethren, hurt not the oil and the wine; do not be guilty of attributing to the in-

fluence of the imagination, to the excitement of the animal passions, or to the agency of Beelzebub, that which should be devoutly and adoringly attributed to the power of the Holy Ghost; bearing in mind that "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in *power*." If you reject these things, when they are confirmed by so many witnesses, with equal propriety might you discard the proofs of ordinary conversion. If you smile at such experiences, as I hope *you* will not, fear lest the ungodly ridicule as superstition and enthusiasm all that the young convert professes to experience, and thus the reality of our religion be questioned. If you will turn over the pages of the New Testament, you will find just such exhibitions of God's power there. And you will recollect, that those extraordinary manifestations of the Holy Spirit have often been made by us subjects of discourse. Let not then the natural reverence which we all have for antiquity, and the charm with which we invest everything that was peculiar to the first age of the church, lead us to extol and admire everything that existed in apostolic times, while we be guilty of rejecting the very same phenomena because we witness it with our own eyes, in these last days. Many can eulogize the carpenter's son as a more profound teacher of wisdom than ever Socrates was; applaud the eloquence of the fishermen, and throw all the enchantments of romance around the babe in the manger; who, never-

theless, it is to be feared, would spurn to receive instructions from any man, however he might be filled with the Holy Ghost, unless he had been initiated into all the mysteries of science, had explored all the metaphysics of theology; and who, so far from condescending to make a stable their place of worship, would feel as though the Almighty was insulted, or could not be devoutly worshipped, unless in a granite or marble temple. But I wander from my subject; brethren, say not, "these men are filled with new wine."

II. VIEWS AND EXPERIENCE IN RELATION TO THE SECOND ADVENT.

Let me now, brethren, invite your attention to a continuation of my experience, on another subject. I was always opposed to the introduction into our pulpits and churches, of all the great moral topics which have agitated the minds of the community for a few years past. And I have thought myself more than fortunate, as you well know, in keeping them all out of our midst. Our little bark has safely outrode all the storms to which other churches have been exposed, and from which they have so severely *suffered*, as I should once have said. I believe I have never preached on one of those topics, and certainly I have never been the open advocate of any of them, unless it might be thought that I have of the cause of Temperance. Here, I confess, I have erred greatly.

One of my main reasons for so doing, however, has been because I plainly saw that one exciting theme prepared the mind for another; and if one was introduced, a hundred might be, and no one could foresee to what such steps might lead.

When the doctrine of Sanctification began to be generally discussed, I thought it a branch of that very tree from which so much bitter fruit had of late been gathered. And when the doctrine of the Second Advent began to be preached, I thought it an offshoot of the doctrine of Sanctification, and that the friends of the former and of the latter would be the same. These convictions were strengthened on listening to several discourses by Mr. Fitch, which were professedly Second Advent sermons, but, in fact, discourses on Sanctification. I thought him really dishonest; wickedly designing, under the cloak of the Second Advent, to palm off Sanctification upon the churches. I publicly rebuked him for it, and left attendance on his lectures. Nor was I pleased with the two or three discourses which I heard from him on the Advent near; I had even invited my own congregation to give him a hearing, supposing that he was a ripe scholar, and a profound theologian. But what was my disappointment and mortification on finding him, as I then thought, such an intolerable perverter of plain texts of Scripture. I can now see that it was myself that was abusing

the plain declarations of God's most holy word; and he was perverting them in my then opinion, because he did not depart from their literal rendering, and give them the spiritual interpretation which I had been taught to do.

I can now see, and am free to admit, that the two doctrines are closely conjoined. Not that every Christian who believes in and embraces the first, will also receive the second; because facts would not bear me out in this remark. But he who has been truly sanctified is better prepared to look at the doctrine of Christ at the door: he is qualified by patience, by lowliness, and by the indwelling influences of the Spirit to sit himself down to the investigation of God's word on this subject, until he arrives at the truth: the ties are rent that once held him to earth, and he is not only willing, but anxious to soar away and meet Jesus in his descent from the skies.

I never directly preached against the doctrine of Christ's Second Advent at hand; though I have often aimed incidentally to tear up some of the superstructure on which the friends of it were endeavoring to build their theory. I had prophesied much evil against all who connected themselves with this cause. I received their books and newspapers, as I could not do otherwise without treating those indecorously who presented them to me. Some of these I read, more per-

haps from curiosity than from anything else; just as one might look on and witness a contest between two pugilists, without feeling any special interest in the success of either party; others I carefully stowed away, intending, at the expiration of 1843, to bring them to light again, and hold them up as a monument of religious folly; then, I was intending to correct the presumption of all the foolish and ignorant who had dared to exalt themselves above the wisdom and erudition of the pulpit. Brethren, do not be guilty of as great a sin, lest you provoke the wrath of the Almighty. Only one day previous to the great blessing which God conferred upon me, and of which I have spoken, I had declared that I would not be seen in a Second Advent meeting. Those composing them, were, I saw, as a class, of too low an order for me to associate with. I had no sympathy for their noise, and for their broken harangues. But how mighty is the arm of God to abase the proud, and to humble the lofty! On the very next day after, so marvellous had been God's dealings with me, that I could not keep away from just such a meeting as I had heretofore despised. My soul wanted to give utterance to its emotions of love to Christ, and to *all* whom he had truly purchased with his blood; and now I was determined that the last vestige of pride should be crucified and driven out of my heart, if, indeed, any yet lurked there. Accordingly I repaired to the

church where those despised followers of the Lamb were holding a series of meetings; and there, to the rejoicing of many hearts, I told what great things God had done for my soul. I was now favorably disposed towards the doctrine of the Advent near, and was willing to read on the subject, as I did occasionally, while I thought, weighed considerations, and prayed more.

It should have been remarked, that at this time my mind was perfectly free from all care and concern. Brother H—— conducted the series of meetings which we had soon determined on holding: Christians were wonderfully quickened, and sinners were pricked in their hearts, and cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?” For about four weeks I did not myself preach a discourse. The minister’s usual anxiety, which attends a revival, was not felt by me. I gave the church, souls, myself, and all into the keeping of God’s hands, while I secluded myself in my study, in obedience to what seemed to be the movings of God’s Spirit, searching the Scriptures, and weeping and praying before God that he would make *truth* known to me. I was aware that there was some truth left, which my mind did not apprehend; and this conviction I expressed to a brother minister who called to see me on the day after I was so signally blest. I sought interviews at various times with the clergymen of the town,

hoping that some words would be providentially dropt that would give me a clue to that for which my heart was anxious. But I always left them with disappointed hopes. At times I fancied that it might, perhaps, be my duty to unite myself with another denomination, where there might be more vital piety, more scripture truth, and a greater field for usefulness. But my views on the leading doctrines of the Bible were unchanged, and I did not and do not feel like sacrificing them on any account. Indeed, these doctrines, as held by our church, never seemed to stand out so prominently on the pages of inspiration as at this moment; they are all harmonious, beautiful, glorious. Well, I would ask myself, with what denomination can I unite? I could fix upon none, a connexion with which I felt would satisfy the strong desires, and calm the restless feelings of my heart. Now my soul was all ecstasy and devotion, and then indescribable darkness and wretchedness would succeed. I wondered that my peace and enjoyment were not as deep and as continuous as those of others who had been baptized with the Holy Ghost; for I was fully conscious of striving, in all things, to please my Heavenly Father; was much in prayer, and felt willing to submit myself entirely to the divine will. Never did I so feel my weakness, my liability to err, my need of the prayers of Christians. O, how I longed to say to each member of my church,

and to every one who had access to a mercy-seat—pray for me; how my soul yearned to make known to my dear people my peculiar exercises of mind, that I might have their sympathies.

Greatly was my soul refreshed and comforted on one occasion, about the first of February, during one of our vestry meetings, to hear a number of praying souls arise, and say that it had been deeply impressed upon their minds that they must pray more than ever for the pastor. One of them stated that the burden of his own prayers had long been for me—that the moment he had undertaken to pray for himself, he almost unconsciously and involuntarily found himself praying for me. Three of these individuals were neither members of our church, nor believers in the doctrine of the Second Advent near, although devoted Christians, having come in to enjoy the season of revival. And now my soul flowed out like water in gratitude and thankfulness to God for the intelligence that others were bearing my case continually up to heaven. Immediately we all bowed before God, and my soul wrestled and agonized before the Throne, that God would keep my feet from stumbling, take me into his hand, and reveal to me not only all truth, but show me what he meant by the peculiar strivings of his Spirit. On returning to my residence, again I knelt to pour out my desires unto God; and no sooner was my

knee bent, than again I found myself, as on the first of January, in the awful presence of Jehovah; fear and trembling seized all my reins, while glory seemed to envelope me. At once, with as much clearness and force as though an audible voice had thundered it in my ear, and down into the very depths of my soul, I was given to understand something to this effect:—the glorious reign of Christ—my own responsible connexion with the accomplishment of his triumph over the wicked—brevity—lightning. Immediately, and for several days following, my mind dwelt with overwhelming interest on what these things might mean. Now, I thought I could interpret them in this way;—God is about to convert the town, and perhaps a large portion of the earth—the day for a temporal millenium is fast dawning;—I am to be used as an instrument in effecting these glorious things for Zion;—my life is just at its close;—all is to be done with the speed of lightning. Again, this was my interpretation: Christ is about to make his personal appearance, for the destruction of the ungodly, and the gathering home of the saints;—I am to sound the Midnight Cry;—the day of probation has just run out, and all are to be hurried into eternity;—these things are to be closed up with the speed of lightning! Impressions of this kind were invariably made upon my mind, whenever I got near to God in holy, agonizing prayer; and whenever my mind

wavered in regard to the near approach of Christ to reign on earth either temporally or spiritually, I was completely wretched; though previously I might have been in religious raptures. Frequently, when in prayer, I would have such heavenly manifestations, and such convictions wrought on my soul, that I would rise from my knees, with the fullest persuasion that Christ was truly at the door. Still I had not studied the Bible with careful reference to the doctrine of the Advent near. I thought the task to be a difficult one, and I did not feel that I had time then to enter upon it. But I could have no inward rest until I made a commencement.

I now began to search the Scriptures, without note or comment, for myself. I took the chart used to illustrate the visions of Daniel, merely to aid in keeping everything clear and distinct before my mind. It was humbling, notwithstanding all that God had done for me, to study the Bible with the aid of a chart, on which I had heretofore looked with so much contempt. There was the figure of a man in a certain attitude! and then, in different postures, the figures of various and most hideous beasts! The repugnance with which I regarded that chart cannot be well conceived. I thought it to have been conjured up by some dreamy, silly person, who was seeking to make everybody like himself. But why should I have had this deep-rooted

prejudice against those symbols? There is man, a being proud of his capacities, allied to God, and the destined associate of angels; what symbol more appropriately chosen to illustrate the occurrence of the greatest events which the world has or will ever witness? There is the lion, the lord of the forest, at whose roar man himself trembles and turns pale; and there are the other mighty beasts of the field, next to man in the scale of being; what symbols more appropriate than these with which to mark the scale of time? Those symbols, those *pictures*, hideous as they appear, why, they are the language of the Bible. And supposing there should be just such a transfer to paper of all events recorded in the word of God, what kind of a scene would be presented before the eye! But the chart is in perfect obedience to the command of God—"Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." I was totally ignorant of just what the chart was designed to illustrate, and knew not what was the reasoning from it.

I cannot here relate what were my feelings as my investigations went on. I was astonished and humbled to observe the Babylonian kingdom represented by the head of *gold*; the Medo-Persian by the breast and arms of *silver*; the Grecian by the belly and thighs of *brass*; and the fourth kingdom by the legs of iron, and its divisions by the feet and toes of iron and of *clay*. And then to

admit, that our own and other proud nations were represented by the feet and toes, "part of iron and part of potter's clay," I could hardly brook; still I would believe it if I had good and sufficient proof for it. Pursuing my study, I was amazed, surprised, delighted, on discovering such a complete correspondence between the vision of Nebuchadnezzar and that of Daniel; and then finding such a perfect likeness between that seen by Daniel and by John the revelator, even to the number of days when the vision should expire. I could but think that John must have been very familiar with the book of Daniel; or that some of his book must have been penned without much inspiration. But I could reconcile the matter easier than this:—it was of God, and he was taking these various means to remind man, at different and remote intervals from each other, that he was not slack concerning his promises, and that he might have some gauge by which to ascertain how fast and at what period the sands of time should all run out. My Polyglot Bible was on my table, and aided me wonderfully in making speedy references to other portions of God's word. Such was the harmony between the books of Daniel and of John, and other books of the Bible; so plainly did the book of Daniel and all the passages to which I had reference for the purpose of comparing Scripture with Scripture, teach the doctrine of the near approach

of Christ, that I began to be suspicious of the edition of my Bible, and actually turned to the title-page to see by whom and when it was published. I know the reference column is the work of man; but still it appears singular, that man, years ago, and probably without any intention of teaching the Second Advent near, should make such happy references.

Having given the book of Daniel a thorough investigation, which I had never before done,—supposing if that or any other book of the Bible really taught the doctrine of Christ's speedy coming, those who were more aged, learned and pious than myself, would be likely to ascertain it; and that when *they* sounded the note of alarm it would be time enough for me to awake,—I was astonished to find the mass of Scripture testimony in favor of this doctrine. My mind had seemed to sympathize with that of Daniel throughout the whole vision; and I waited in fearful suspense for every word of explanation and revelation which the angel gave him; and when his last words were uttered, as contained in the last verse of the last chapter of Daniel, my interest was overwhelming; and I asked, what do these things mean? They cannot have but a very partial reference to Daniel's people after the flesh. Daniel could not have understood them thus. Had they been a plain, literal account of what was to befall his own people, he could

not have been so amazed and astonished; he would have more readily comprehended the meaning of the angel's instructions. Besides, there are things in the book which cannot be interpreted as having a mere reference to the Jews; there is a mist, a veil, drawn over the whole book when such an application is made of it. On the other hand, all is clear and harmonious, when it is applied to teach mainly the captivity and the deliverance of the children of God, together with the setting up of the kingdom of Christ.

I accordingly found that if I was still resolved on making the Bible my chart in these perilous times, *I must believe* that the book of Daniel contains a full description of the kingdoms of this world down to the present hour—that it introduces the kingdom of the Messiah, which is just ready to be set up, the consummation of all things, the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, to receive his dear disciples home to everlasting habitations, the burning of the earth, and the destruction of the wicked.

When I found it admitted, on all hands, that the seventy weeks were weeks of years, and that near the expiration of 490 years Messiah the Prince *was* cut off according to the vision; the inference appeared both natural and necessary, that the *days* should be considered as prophetic days or solar years; and finding that events corresponding exactly to those referred to in the vision, were engraved on

the broad page of history, and harmonized perfectly with those in the vision; and seeing that if the last chapter of Daniel did not teach the final resurrection and judgment, no chapter of the New Testament did; that the *days* in the last verse of that chapter included the occurrence of those great events which Daniel *himself* was to witness; and that if it were allowed that this chapter does refer to the final judgment, (and before this controversy, it has always been supposed to,) then it seemed to me to be a very strange appendage to affix to the vision which included events which had transpired centuries ago—a wonderful leaping from 164 B. C., when *Antiochus* died, or 68 A. D., when *Nero* died, to the time of the judgment, &c.:—I accordingly felt that I *must* give way to the clear and sober convictions not only of my understanding, but to the more solemn convictions of my soul, to which the truth was now applied with unspeakable power. Still I sought for additional evidence, by comparing the contents of the book of Daniel with other portions of God's word, by the signs of the times in the natural, political, the commercial, the moral and religious world; and I thought that if we had not, and were not witnessing these *signs* at the present day, then my imagination could not conceive of what those signs spoken of by our Saviour could possibly be, and it would relieve my mind much to see an individual sit down, and with pencil

and brush delineate them any better than they had already been exhibited.

Humbling and mortifying as it would have been to me six months ago to have taken my seat at the feet of brother Miller, brother Hersey, and brother Himes, I could do it now without a struggle. Light began to break in upon my mind by degrees, until the conflict of old and long-cherished prejudices and errors with pure truth ended forever, and was succeeded with indescribable peace and glory, and yet with dreadful solemnity of mind; and whereas for the past two months, although I had received great light on the doctrine of holiness, yet, as remarked, I had felt as though some undiscovered truth was still to be perceived, not even *supposing* that it was the doctrine of the Advent near; and whereas I had felt as though the firmament of my mind was yet bedotted with a few remaining clouds, I could now look up to the natural heavens, which were then as clear as crystal, and feel that my mind was *just like* those heavens; all was like the blazing sun in yon azure blue. I now found that I stood where I could run and read; that I had obtained the mystical key, by which I could open at pleasure and lay my hand on each and all the sparkling gems and precious pearls of the holy treasury; that the Holy Spirit had conferred upon me *the white stone*, with the new name written thereon, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

I seemed to stand on a rock which hell could not shake, and to be armed with ten thousand weapons with which to meet all the hosts of darkness.

On the next Sunday I preached the blessed doctrine of Christ at the door; and O the power of God which came down upon me! I was amazed and confounded at the words which God poured from my lips; for I can call God to witness that it was not *me* that spoke, it was the Holy Ghost that spake by me! The awful solemnity of that day, of that place, and of that audience, can *never* be forgotten. After the close of the afternoon services, I feared to open even the lids of the Bible, for the truth came almost independent of the Bible, rushing and streaming, and blazing into my mind like waves of light; God's Holy Spirit still continued to increase upon me, until my body was entirely *prostrated*, my strength gone, and I was compelled to cry out after the example of my Master,—“Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.”

Yes, singular, and almost blasphemous as it might appear to some, I could but pray that light might be in a measure withdrawn from my mind, and glory from my soul, if agreeable to God's will. Nevertheless, without the Divine will, I felt ready to die under it. Before retiring to rest, God heard; and my soul, that had been like the destructive tempest of the ocean, settled down into the calm and

quiet of the rivulet of the valley, and I gave myself to slumber as though nothing had happened, and slept sweetly until morning.

And now, my dear brethren, I feel so confident that the judgment is just at hand, that the great moral drama of earth is just over, and that in a very few more months, at least, I shall see my Jesus descending from the skies, that I feel as though I could stand up alone in the face of all Christendom in defence of these things. God has wrought it into my very soul: he has given me the *evidence* of it there. Ah! that is significant language! O that I had seen these things years ago! How have I been in such a dungeon all my life! What a *Babylon*, what a Babylon I have been inhabiting; like the feet and the toes of the image, which were part of clay and part of iron, so the world, our country, philosophy, religion, are a perfect compound. Religious truth has become curiously complicated, and distributed and divided around among all the different sects of professing Christians, each having a portion of the truth; while Christians, in general, have the sacred truth of Christ as our only ground of hope and salvation; but what denomination has most of the love of Jesus—most of vital godliness, I know not: this seems to be like the blood which is not confined to any one portion, but spreads and diffuses its vital power throughout the whole body. I must say that the religion of Protestants, as it is

now held, is, to use the weakest language, tinged with a little atheism, and deism, and Unitarianism, and Universalism, and philosophy, and mysticism. I am grieved to say it, but it is even so. Many of our dear brethren almost deny the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead,—the body is to rise, if at all, in some ethereal, invisible form; and heaven, and Jesus, and all holy intelligences are of the same subtle nature. With many, the judgment, to a great extent, was at the destruction of Jerusalem. And then, too, Christ comes the *second* time, as he comes to every man the second time when he *dies*. Whereas Paul says that he shall appear the second time, when he comes, “without sin unto salvation.” O, I am confounded at our past ignorance of the word of God, and at our awful abuse of its doctrines. We have spiritualized them all away, until our holy religion has neither life nor tangibility, and there is hardly a solitary motive left to use in inspiring to a life of holiness, and in drawing the poor soul up to heaven! Where is the Christian’s God, the Christian’s Savior, the Christian’s Comforter, the Christian’s Bible? O, to weep tears of blood! The Bible, the Bible! The *Old* Testament we have all, long since, thrown over to the carnal Jew: and as to the *New* Testament, we have given him a good proportion of that too, and the rest is distributed among Christians, philosophers, and scoffers. O, what a

pity ! How it has pained my very soul for the past few months ! Where is the Christian's Bible ?

And now, where are the watchmen upon the walls, that have dared to speak the truth **FEARLESSLY**, without any regard to popular opinion, station, and at the peril of their idol,—reputation and influence ? Come down into the streets of this blazing Babylon ; enter the houses of merchandise, and the gorgeous palaces of the professed disciples of our dear Master, who had not where to lay his head : and then look abroad and see a heathen world plunging down to hell ! O, is this, is this primitive Christianity ? and yet we are told that Christians are going to convert the world ! Why, the energies of the Christian church are all paralyzed, and there are hardly the least signs of life in the spiritual body as a whole ; and yet some tell us that the temporal millennium is to commence this very year, or hereabouts ; and perhaps in the next breath, that the treasury is exhausted, that candidates for the field have withdrawn their names, that the missionary has setted down in utter *despair*, finding it worse than useless to cry out, “Come over and help us !” while it is boldly confessed that we need a “*History of Moral Stagnation.*” And it is verily so.

O, why do not the dear disciples see, that Jehovah is reining in the chariot steeds of earth, and shouting, “Thus far and no far-

ther?" Where are the means, but above all, where is the *disposition* to convert the world to Christ! Where is the Christian nation that will be the first to advance in this enterprise? England, according to her own confession, is fast going back to heathenism. America, I fear, is in danger of a like predicament; she is exporting Bibles and missionaries to Germany, and importing, in exchange, German neology, the direct tendency of which is to rob the Bible of its inspiration, miracles, and divine authority. She is quite in the arms of the papal hierarchy; the tramp of the iron foot of the Pope already breaks upon our ear from over the hills and valleys of the great West. I am truly confounded, as I look and behold the death-like slumbers of the church; and I do solemnly believe that there is nothing that can save us but the interposition of his arm who is the Almighty. Unless the Prince, the mighty Conqueror, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, does speedily appear, all is lost. But for myself, I entertain no fears. Christ will come, and deliver us according to the Word of God, ere such a crisis shall occur. I believe it with all my soul. I believe it with as much confidence as I believe that the doctrine of regeneration is a doctrine of the Bible; with as much, and perhaps more assurance than I believe that I have a personal interest in the blood of Christ. I am willing to peril everything on it. In thus proclaiming, I am well aware

that I incur a most tremendous responsibility. Granted ; so did Noah, and Jonah. But hear, beloved brethren ; *God* has made me take upon myself this awful responsibility ; and you *must* feel that I should be the last man to bear it, had not God himself laid it upon me. Once I should have trembled to have stood up in the face of the world and the church, feeble as I am, to preach this startling, awful, and yet, to the Christian, glorious truth. But God has ordered ; God is on my side ; and God is witness to what I write. O, that I had been more diligent for my Master ; that I had labored more faithfully for souls ; that I had more frequently denied self, and made greater sacrifices for him who died for me, and who is now coming to take me to be with him forever ! At the eleventh hour, and when the last cry, that “the Bridegroom cometh,” is just ready to be uttered, I am graciously brought in, to blow the trumpet in Zion, and to sound the alarm in God’s holy mountain.

My soul is now content, and in a state of greater peace and joy than ever ; Jesus has seemed to smile affectionately ; and the Spirit, which had so long been striving with me in relation to something, seems to have left me to go about my Father’s business.

Beloved brethren, do not censure me for the confident tone in which I speak ; for it is the confidence of my soul. God has wrought this great truth on *my* soul, too, “as with a

pen of iron!" I cannot think that it is my nature to be headstrong in my religious opinions; on the contrary, I have ever been more disposed to yield my own to the better judgment and wisdom of my superiors. There is only one respect in which I think that I have the advantage of those who differ with us on the great question of Christ's Advent; it is that God has vouchsafed to me the aid of the Spirit of truth to lead me into all truth, and to show me things to come.

In the midst of such a clashing of opinions on this subject, I want light; I want a guide; and I feel that I must make the Bible that light, and the Spirit that guide, and learn and decide for myself. I do not set myself up haughtily and arrogantly as a teacher of those who are so much my seniors, and for whom I have not as yet lost my reverence. I am only reading God's word for myself, and I hope that I shall teach it with a modesty becoming my youth. If now I have imbibed an error, then I will with all patience and humility sit at the feet of any of our Master's holy servants who can supply me with the truth, promising that I will heartily renounce my present for more scriptural views, when they are produced, and will rejoice to labor on for years to come in the cause of Christ, feeling that I am just qualified to be a laborer in the vineyard of our Lord. I am wedded to no party, and to no stereotyped theory. What I have learnt

of late, I have, I believe, been taught by the word of God. I have not read Mr. Miller's lectures, neither know what they are. As to any mortification or chagrin which it might be supposed that I should feel, should time prove my error, I have only to say, that if a vestige of pride is yet lurking in my heart, I desire its total destruction. Yea, more, if I am deceived, which I do not believe, I am perfectly willing to be held up to the world as a subject of religious fanaticism. In this way I may subserve the cause of religion, by being a warning to future generations, to be careful how they handle the word of God. I am willing to be remembered, only to be despised.

But it may be said that I am laboring under a delusion; that I am visionary and fanatical. In refutation of this charge, I must refer not only to the cast of my mind, which would sooner incline me to scepticism than to fanaticism, and sooner subject me to the slow progress of my reason, than to any sudden impulses of feeling; but to the brief history of my life, brethren, as you are acquainted with it. *You* know that I have always been a conservative on all the great moral topics of the day, and exceedingly fearful of all "isms." And as for being deluded, I cannot allow. I know that the devil is always busy, and for fear of attributing either to the devil or to nature what ought to be attributed to grace or to God's Spirit, I have all my

life long been in bondage. Must I throw away all good impressions and influences for fear the devil may have originated them? If in the present instance I am deluded, then I was deluded fourteen weeks since, and sixteen years ago, when first converted to God. The same kind of arguments by which I satisfy myself that I was ever converted, I urge in order to prove the reality of what I experienced at the opening of this year; and in like manner I prove the genuineness of what I have again experienced by what I then saw and felt; each were perfect conversions, brought about by the sovereign agency of God. If it still be contended that I am deluded, then I would humbly ask, how may I know when my prayers are answered; when I am under the influences of God's Spirit, and the leadings of the spirit of truth? In despair I must cry out—I am like a vessel at sea, with the storm beating, the winds raging, the waves dashing, the stars obscured in impenetrable darkness, the helm gone, and chart and compass as good as useless. Have we forgotten some of the first principles of our faith? Has God left us to such awful uncertainty, and been no more mindful of the safety, comfort and good of his children? The Spirit and the Word agree in what I have seen and felt; and I feel as though it would be next to the commission of that sin which hath no forgiveness, either in this world or in the world to come, to go contra-

ry to the Bible as I now read it, and to the Spirit which now influences me to give the midnight cry. It is far, far easier for me to believe than to disbelieve that Christ standeth at the door; and that I am under the influence of the good, than of the evil spirit. Could the devil so deceive me, and fill my soul for days and weeks with such unutterable peace, joy, and glory—give me such nearness to God in prayer—make me willing to leave all for Christ's sake—to endure the loss of the friendship and esteem of my dear brethren—to be accounted as “stupid”—and willingly to stand and suffer the scoffs and sneers of both the wicked and the professedly religious! Will not Satan be likely to lose more than he can possibly gain by such a manœuvre? *I must hazard the issue*, in connection with many whom I am gratified and surprised to find have had an experience just like my own on this subject; *they* are good men, whatever *I* may be.

In months and years gone by, the preaching of “Christ at the door” has resulted in the conversion of souls, who still adorn their profession. If the preaching of this doctrine is calculated to frighten men into religion, and to make spurious converts, then is the preaching of future punishment, when disconnected with this subject, liable to like objection. And if the doctrine that Christ is about to leave the mediatorial seat, is calculated to lead to insanity, then should the

doctrine of the final judgment be a proscribed theme, on the same ground. And the friends of evangelical religion ought to beware how fast they work into the hands of those who are not the friends of the religion of Christ. Should time continue, and the world run on as ever, they will have to meet their enemies under circumstances new and strange, but which they will have the satisfaction of knowing have been of their own creating. The fortifications of sand which they have hastily thrown up as a seeming defence against one enemy, will be washed away by the first storm that sets in from the opposite quarter.

One good, at least, has already resulted from this controversy: it has shown to some extent what are the real, tangible doctrines of the church—to what the heart as well as the mind assents in the Scriptures; and it has exhumed some of the cardinal doctrines of our holy religion, with the reasonable hope that they will be preserved, in all their native freshness and power, unto the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And now, dear brethren, I take my leave of you; and in so doing, let me ask you, as friends to me and to the cause of truth, will you account for what I have experienced? If disposed to reject all natural phenomena, as indicative of Christ's coming, as Christian philosophers will you account for the present religious phenomena in the moral heavens!

How is it? I had never read the experience of any soul on this subject, until I read my own experience in theirs. Here are ministers of the gospel, and Christians of all sects, in all parts of our land, without any previous knowledge of each other, exercised alike by the Spirit and power of God, and led into the unshaken belief that the Judge standeth at the door. *And nothing as yet advanced by their opponents can persuade them to the contrary!*

Brethren, I could write much, but time is short and forbids it. I have not given you the argument on this great subject, for it was not my design so to do. I only give you my *experience* in connection with it. Others have prepared works on this subject, to the investigation of which I now invite your prayerful attention. My present aim is merely to conciliate your feelings in behalf of this great truth. God's word is intelligible; you may understand it; search for it with childlike simplicity; cry after it, and you shall find it. Consider, God is the same as ever; and hence it would not be strange, if he should cause the midnight cry to swell up first from among the poor and illiterate. He is a mysterious God!

And now, brethren, often have I wept and agonized in prayer to God for you. You have my heart; I love you; and because I love you, I want you to see the truth. You have labored anxiously and faithfully

for God, and now I want you to lift up your heads and rejoice, for your *redemption* draweth nigh. You need not be assured that it is not in my heart to harbor one hard feeling against those who do not see the vision: I can sympathize with them in their blindness—just so *I* once was, and should be now but for the sovereign power and unmerited grace of God. I can truly say that I never loved them so well: and I feel strong convictions that they will *soon* be startled from their slumbers. If ever there was a time when every minister of Christ should prayerfully think, solemnly study, and independently act, *now* is that moment. They hazard souls more than we do: for if Christ should come *suddenly*, how many poor souls will they be the occasion of destroying! Brethren, need I remind you of your own individual responsibility at this interesting period? Will you suffer one soul to perish through your indifference to the cause of truth!

Brethren, I have written hastily and familiarly. I have left much unsaid, and some things unexplained. By a reference to page 26, you will perceive that I allude to one brother in particular, who had for weeks and months prayed much for me, although we had had but a partial acquaintance. He knew not, as he has since confessed, why he should have such feelings for me. But when God so signally blest me at the opening of this year, then with a heart full of emotion

and tears gushing from his eyes, he said God had heard his prayers, and made all plain to him. I have learned, too, that many praying souls had agonized in prayer to God for me, that my eyes might be opened to the momentous truth of the approach of our Lord to gather home his children; and they had gained an evidence at a throne of grace that their prayers were accepted, and should be answered. My own people had felt, and publicly declared their convictions, that persecution and suffering awaited me for the truth's sake; and hence their prayers ascended to God in my behalf, little thinking, as well as myself, from what quarter, and on what ground, the trial and pain would come. Their impressions were well founded; the fiery trial has overtaken me; but as I then said, so I now say, let the storm come; I was never before worthy of persecution. God, however, is my daily support and consolation; and I am thankful to be one to suffer reproach for his sake; for I have the promise that if I suffer with him, I shall also reign with him. And now it is my prayer that this brief narrative of God's gracious dealings with me, may be blest to your everlasting good.

May the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be with you all forever. AMEN.

Your beloved brother,

F. G. BROWN.

Boston, April 19, 1843.

APPENDIX.

NOTE. The following letters, written by Rev. J. B. Cook, of Middletown, Ct., exhibit the progress of his mind and the results of his investigations of the doctrine of the Second Advent. They are appended to this narrative, in the hope that they may be blest to the souls of some of the servants of Christ.

MIDDLETOWN, April 14, 1843.

DEAR BROTHER BROWN,—It gives me pleasure to be able to add my humble testimony to yours, relative to our Lord's glorious appearing, and the influence of this truth on the heart and life. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."

It is an interesting fact, that there are several ministers, one of the Episcopal church, another of the Baptist, and another of the Congregational, whose deep and awful convictions of these things may be expressed in your own language. Indeed, all with whom I have conversed, who are waiting for the coming of Jesus, have substantially the same experience. In most instances, it is in advance of all ordinary Christian experience. It cuts

the soul loose from the world, lifts it above the earth, and fills it with glory and with God. They feel, speak, pray, and sing with unwonted energy. They are more like the first Christians than any whom I have known. On the day of Pentecost they felt so deeply, spoke with such power, and were so much above the fear of man, that unbelievers said, "These men are filled with new wine." It was not natural for poor men to feel so happy and independent. It was not common for uneducated men to utter such strong emotions in such resistless argument, without something to excite them. It is apparent, also, that the Second Advent friends have something that is not natural to them; therefore, they ascribe it to some cause. They know that we do not drink wine, and they dare not say it is from Satan; hence they aver that we are crazy. Anything to set aside the agency of the Holy Ghost. A fact may not be amiss: One of my good deacons, who felt obliged to account for my depth of feeling for the salvation of men, and burning love to Christ and his appearing, said, in a neighboring city, that I must be crazy. He called several times, from sheer sympathy, to see me; we did not dispute, but sung, and then bowed in solemn prayer till all prayed. The good deacon, though he felt like a great sinner under awful conviction, was touched, and made more willing to look at our Lord's coming. In a

short time he became quite as crazy as his so much pitied pastor. But now he *knows* "*we are not mad.*" No upright mind can long ascribe this spiritual phenomena to any other agency than that of the good Spirit, which applies the most overwhelming truths to the soul.

Judging from facts, which have come under my own observation, I should think that thousands have had an experience, in all its leading characteristics, like our own. Our spirit is one—our views, our language, our desire the same. Each pulsation of my soul beats in unison with yours. Six ministers, as I have learned very recently, say their experiences agree with ours. There is a flood of light poured on our minds from the Bible. The seals of the prophecies seem broken off, and the mysteries unravelled—indeed, the sacred volume seems all light, the blessed Savior its fulness, and the glory to be revealed as in open vision. I have learned more of the present and prospective condition of man, more of Christ and his kingdom, during the past few weeks, than during all my former life. My soul reposes on God, and seems satisfied with its having, at least, a clue to his purposes relating to man.

The nature and reality of our experience may be seen by contrasting it with those who have opposed the speedy coming of our Lord. Were we in a delusion, and our opponents basking in the sunshine of truth, we

might expect to see them just so much more spiritual and separate from the world, and zealous for the Lord of Hosts. But alas, their Lord seems, as he says he will, in the parable of the talents, to have taken away what they had. Many of them lose their interest in prayer, even for inquiring souls. I have seen them go straightway into darkness, their lamps go out, and they feel and say that they are wretched. Now my brother, “do men gather *grapes* of *thorns*, or *figs* of *thistles*?” “Make the tree *good*, then the *fruit* will be good.” The truth is adapted to our minds. It sits easily and naturally on our hearts. It is attended by the good Spirit, makes us at home with God in prayer, at peace with ourselves, and to feel compassion toward all mankind. If, therefore, any feel at war with themselves, and in sympathy with the wicked, they have proof positive that they are wrong—radically wrong. This experimental truth is so simple that every mind can grasp it. Every one, not a stranger to themselves and to truth, must see that when love to God burns within, till it absorbs the whole soul, and our eyes are opened to see that we should warn the world, doomed to fire,—when we are “crucified to the world, and the world to us,” we must be actuated by a spirit that is not of this world. It is the good Spirit, which has no sympathy with sin, in the church, or out of it. This experience,

standing out in such striking contrast with that above stated, is a strong confirmation of prophecy. Thousands who do not receive our views, say that we are in the last days, but the Spirit must be "poured out" according to prophecy. Now we may ask where are any more remarkable proofs of this fulfilment, than in cases like your own, among those who believe the Lord's coming at the doors?

Allow me to say some things, which I feel compelled to, though they may seem severe. They are severe, however, only because they are, I solemnly believe, true. Nothing but the truth searches out and shows up what is opposed to the simplicity of Christ. My mind seems to have been like that of the prophet of God, in the chambers of imagery. The views I have had of the church are awfully solemn. It gives me no pleasure to allude to them,—I should not, but from a painful conviction of duty. "That which makes manifest *is truth*." It is manifest to me, that the ruling spirit of this world controls most professors in their dress, in their sanctuaries, in the order of their worship, in the rage for a popular ministry, and in the means for perpetuating such a ministry as the worldly, rather than the spiritually-minded, will follow and applaud. The minister who pleases the rich, and secures their attendance by the poetry and eloquence of his sermons, is praised, on the same principle that a successful lawyer or

mercantile adventurer is. "Men will praise thee, when thou doest well for thyself." But alas, this kind of doing well by a minister, is, I solemnly fear, but a device of the devil to destroy souls. There are many powerful elements in our nature which the tempter employs to make us worldly. They are employed with tremendous effect to make professors dress fashionably, walk to the house of God fashionably, sit up in church fashionably, worship fashionably, preach and pray fashionably, and, though deeply pained to record it, truth adds—go to hell fashionably! O that their dreadful delusion might end before the blast of the seventh trumpet shall end it for them. *Fashionable disciples of a crucified Jesus!* The sin of the Pharisees was unbelief. It was occasioned by their yielding to the spirit of this world. "How can ye believe, who receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?"

When we with Christian faithfulness say these things to those who most need warning, they regard us a little as Ahab did Elijah: "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" But were we silent, these very ministers would mark our inconsistency. Many ministers and people unite to hinder the breaking of the slumbers of the church by the revealed truth that Christ is coming. Alas! that they do not see that opposition to his second advent is more sinful than was the

opposition of the scribes and Pharisees to him at his first advent: then he came to suffer and die, now he is coming to *be glorified*. He is coming to reward all his injured servants. O, it is "far more exceeding" sinful for them to oppose the Savior's coming now, than eighteen hundred years ago. They have more light,—they oppose the destruction of the man of sin, the consummation of Christ's glory, and the happiness of all his servants. They would perpetuate the reign of sin and Satan, and see hundreds of thousands going weekly to perdition.

That the church is seeking to perpetuate the existing state of things, is seen in all that is said and done to resist a change. It is seen in the advice given to ministers to adapt their discourses to the taste of respectable ungodliness. Thousands of pastors would lose their places, did they not conform, and leave sin in its more specious forms unreprieved. One minister just told me that his people wanted him to cater to the Unitarian palate of his audience. Many ministers need no such advice from without to induce them to such a course. They are too "wise and prudent" to risk much on God's word. They want a "sign,"—something to insure them. So did the chief priests; and so they were damned. Could I speak in trumpet tones, I would say to every one who is fearful to follow the word and the Spirit of God, "O ye of little faith."

You tell a sinner to cast himself on God,—why don't you? Unbelief in a minister of Christ is far more sinful than in a sceptic, whose mind has always been darkened. Their excuse is, that there are difficulties about the prophetic periods; but you are right in saying that if we set aside all the evidence from that source, we ought still to expect the speedy coming of our Lord. Thousands have become assured of it, by the current language of Scripture, sent home to the heart by the Spirit.

It is not for me to judge or set at naught my brother,—but it is for me to give full utterance to truth, when our Lord has written it on my heart. He has written out two classes of ministers, as plainly as he has two classes of people—Matt. vii. 21—27. One class digs deep, and does God's will at all hazards—does not, dares not, flinch, though traduced and despised: these *stand*. The other class do many things—achieve wonders—are highly esteemed, but they build on human wisdom and prudence, which is folly—'t is sliding sand. This class "*fall*" forever.

In Matt. xxiv. 42—51, our Lord has given us a pair of scales in which all ministers may be weighed. One class is free to avow their expectation of their Lord's coming. They do not fear a failure; therefore they say to the household, be ye ready—trim your lamps—have them well filled and burn-

ing. Let your work be all done and well done. Now what says the Judge? "Blessed is that servant"—"He will make him ruler."

. The other class is not looking for the Lord's coming. From some cause they say that our Lord is not now to be expected. They call their fellow-servants, who would rouse the household, weak, or deluded, or insane. O, that they would read their doom! They say to others, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." My soul is pained to see ministers living in disregard of more plain and pointed descriptions of their character and their doom, than did the scribes and Pharisees. If courtesy or charity demands silence of me as to the doom which Jesus has written out beforehand, for those who say their "Lord *delayeth* his coming;" then are they required, on the same principle, to hush the note of alarm, given to arouse the unbelievers in their congregation? No. No, it is not charity to be silent. It is treason to Christ and cruelty to man, either to suppress or misconstrue the doom of the unbeliever, or the unfaithful minister.

My brother, we must renounce all our ideas of faith and spiritual guidance, and become infidels in heart, before we can cherish a doubt as to which of the above classes we and all other ministers should belong. At all events, I go for trusting all with God

—for following the Lamb whithersoever he leads. When the truth is seen, it should be received, though it subject us to a banishment in our day, as painful as was that of Roger Williams. Nay, it should be proclaimed, though it consigned us to the fiery furnace, seven times heated. I hear the Judge saying, “If any man come to me, and hate not father and mother, wife and children, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” These are fearful words, because they cut off so large a portion of those for whom we would entertain a hope.

Our Lord is coming,—no one can dispute this except they be ignorant, or at heart infidels. Then let us preach his coming, in public and in private. If our ministering brethren shut us out, it will be one fearful token against them; Isa. lxvi. 5. “Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word. Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name’s sake, said, Let the Lord be magnified; but He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.” I pity them, from my soul. Father, forgive them. Amen!

The accompanying letters show the progress of my mind in relation to the Second Advent, and are at your service. Adieu.

Yours in the blessed hope,

J. B. COOK.

From the Christian Secretary.

MIDDLETOWN, Jan. 30, 1843.

BRO. BURR,—I feel very solemn in making this communication. It may surprise some,—make others think me weak and wavering,—and others still, that I am as Festus thought Paul, mad; but no,—I “speak forth the words of truth and soberness.” My object is, in part, to forestall false reports of what is passing here. We are having Second Advent meetings in our church, and my views and feelings have undergone a great change. It began last August, by a singularly sweet and holy influence, which led me to pray over and investigate this subject. It was not by human agency, for I was alone with God. It was not from a prepossession in its favor, because I was as much afraid of it as many unconverted men are of religion. If I were ever led by the Holy Spirit, or if I know what this leading is, that blessed guide of God’s people led me solemnly to contemplate this subject. Having been very much engaged through the winter, my investigations have proceeded slowly, till the 21st inst., when brother Stoddard began to lecture. I need not describe the great change of which I have been the subject. Suffice it to say, I have never, since my conversion, felt so much like a young convert as I do now. I fear neither poverty, nor reproach—indeed, I dread nothing save the displeasure of God. My prejudice, my pride, my desire to please

men, seems to be gone ; so that I am the Lord's freeman. Let me say, then, that *I am solemnly persuaded that the doctrine* of our blessed Lord's speedy coming is of God.

I have not time to furnish you with but a brief statement of the hope that is in me. I had read the prophecies with much interest, and had learned something of what others have written, but still darkness, more or less dense, seemed to shroud them from my view. My understanding was not convinced. Now I am persuaded—my mind *reposes* in the persuasion that the truth is seen. To show that the clouds of darkness have shrouded this portion of God's word, this fact is in point. An infidel, having read Prof. Stuart, said, "*Well*, he makes the Bible mean but very little, and that is the opinion I always had of it." I frankly confess that many of the prophecies have very little meaning in my view, if they be interpreted as they have been. Their obscurity has been increased, —their darkness has been perpetuated, by overlooking *their simplicity*.

I got some views, thirteen years since, from Elder Frey concerning the Jews' return, which I have ever entertained, because I was sure he was an honest and unwearied student of the prophecies. But just come out from the poetry and symbolic prophecy of the *Old Testament*, where the distinction between the national and the real Israel is not

very accurately maintained, into the clearer light of the New. Here the Old Covenant is seen to have been *vanishing away* more than seventeen hundred years ago. Now don't supply another idea. "That which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to *vanish away*," (not restored.) "They that are under the *law* are under the curse," (not under the promise.) They adhered only to "*the letter*," which *killed*, and rejected the promise, which alone could give life. They invoked the blood of Messiah on them, and wrath came on them to the uttermost—"wrath to the uttermost." These passages should be understood as they say. As many of the Jews as adhered to "the law,"—"the letter," the Old Covenant, have perished. This was so at the destruction of Jerusalem, and has been so since; by consequence all other Jews, as really as Gentiles, who are not brought off from the Old Covenant must perish, because the law cannot restore Jews more than Gentiles. If they be ever grafted in, it must be "by *faith*." If they ever become the children of God, they must believe in Christ. Gal. iii. 8—10, and 26—30.

There are only two Jerusalems answering to the two covenants. The old has nothing left but a few fragments floating down the current of time. It is a wreck from which none are saved; except those who are brought off by Christ. They must let go and betake themselves to the better Covenant which di-

rects their minds to the Jerusalem above—"the city which hath foundations—the heavenly country." Now the obscure in prophecy should be interpreted by this plain, unambiguous language. Then all is clear, that the unbelieving Jews of our day are lost, as really as in the first age of Christianity, except they repent. The inheritance given to Abraham by promise, and which is "*sure to all the seed,*" is the heavenly Jerusalem, and this is according to God's promise, "in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." I mean to say that there is no *third* or *immediate* Jerusalem. As to the signs, I have not room to say but a word. It seems to me plain, that as the Jewish Christians had signs given them, by which they might know when to escape, so has our Lord given us signs of his second coming. Nay, he has fulfilled them in this generation literally. He says, therefore, "*Know* that it is nigh, even at the doors." 'This, then, is my solemn conviction, that the coming of the *Lord draweth nigh*. I lift up my head in hope, and say, "Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly." Amen!

I do affectionately entreat my brethren in the ministry to give this subject a candid, prayerful investigation. You will be greatly blessed, if I may judge from my experience, in opening your pulpits as well as your hearts. But let others do as they may, I

will not be among the "foolish virgins," nor among "the fearful and unbelieving." May none of you be.

Yours, J. B. Cook.

From the Sentinel and Witness.

THE Lord's second coming seems to have been ever present to the minds of the apostles, when they looked forward into futurity; "For our conversation is in heaven, whence also we *look* for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." "To them that *look* for him, shall he appear a second time." He will give a crown of life to all "who *love his appearing*."

That he will appear, be seen in person, is taught in the most intelligible terms: "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall *so come in like manner* as ye have seen him go into heaven." Jesus is the seed of Abraham, to whom the promises were made, Gal. iii. 16. Those who are of faith, are Christ's, and thus they become heirs "according to promise." They will be conformed in their persons, as well as characters, to their Lord; as it is written, "He will change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto *His glorious body*," Phil. iii. 21. "When He shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall *see* him as he is," 1 John iii. 2. This is not all shadowy or ghostly; because it is the consummation of that renewing, of which the apostle speaks, "after the image of him that made" us. The idea of the Messiah's per-

sonal appearing is not an isolated one; but seems linked in with other more generally received truths, so that I discover no more difficulty in believing it, than I have in believing that Moses and Elijah were seen "in the holy mount" by the apostles.

But why do you believe this event is at hand? In reply, let me say, that I have reflected on the subject a great deal, and have come to the conclusion that it is so from the force of evidence. This evidence cannot be given now, except in the most brief manner possible. The millennium, which Christians generally believe to be near, is subsequent to the second advent, because the figurative interpretation of Rev. xx. 16, conflicts with some of the plainest assertions of inspired men. The doctrine of a temporal millennium has this passage, interpreted *figuratively*, for its basis. But after investigation, this seems to oppose other plain declarations of God's word. Dan. vii. 11—22. The horn—the Papal power—made war with the saints, and prevailed against them. How long? Until the Ancient of Days came. Surely, Satan cannot be bound, so long as his most efficient agent is not only making war, but prevailing! Matt. xiii. 36, 43. The tares grow with the wheat. How long? "Till the end," when the righteous shall be made "to shine forth as the sun," according to the prophecy of Dan. xii. 3.

Jesus says, Luke xxi. 28, when these

things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.* At what period then, in the Divine dispensation, will this redemption take place? Let the apostle answer, Rom. viii. 22, 23: "The whole creation groaneth—even we ourselves groan, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Here there is no room for a thousand years to intervene between the deliverance of creation and their resurrection. There is no place for a thousand years between the signs foretold by our blessed Lord, and the redemption promised his disciples. There is nothing in the prediction of Daniel to authorize the insertion of a thousand years, or even days, between the breaking up of anti-christ and our Lord's Advent; for thus it is written, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." If we allow our minds to follow the plain, unambiguous language of inspiration, it is all day-light. Satan is to be bound, Rev. xx. 2; but no one can bind the strong man armed except a stronger than he, which is Jesus, and this binding, or consuming, is stated in plain language, 2 Thess. ii. 8. Then Satan cannot deceive those who have

* This redemption could not have been their escape from Jerusalem, because they were to escape for their lives, not even turning back to take up their garments. To flee utterly destitute, was more like exile, than *the* redemption, when they should stand before the Son of man, ver. 36.

part in the "first resurrection;" but they shall live and reign according to promise. Then there will be no occasion for any of them to say to his neighbor, "know the Lord," as in the present state, "for all shall know Him," without instruction, "from the least to the greatest." Then there will be "none to hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain." It will be a new order of things; and this will be the millennium of the Bible, subsequent to our Lord's "glorious appearing," and the resurrection. As to the prophetic periods named in Daniel and John, I see and feel that they are involved in obscurity; but after hearing the recent lectures and discussions, and reading Profs. Stuart and Chase, Drs. Cox and Duffield, Messrs. Dowling, Fitch and Bernard, the *probability* is to my mind that the period of Dan. viii. 14, is 2300 years, the period through which the whole scheme of his prophecy extends. Gabriel explained "*the vision*," and told him that 70 sevens, or 490 years, were determined or "cut off" from the whole period, as I suppose, and gave it a date from the going forth of the commandment, Dan. ix. 22, 25. This, it seems to me, was most probably the decree of Artaxerxes, B. C. 457—Ezra viii. *If so*, then the 490 years terminated in the 33d year of the Christian era, and the 2300 will terminate this year. As I approached this conclusion, I trembled—never have I been so overwhelmed, so crushed by any admission, as

by this. I could have borne but little more; but I did not, durst not, resist the conviction—suffice it to say, that my feelings were subsequently as delightfully solemn as they were overpowering. Never have I had a sweeter experience, and if it be a blessing to realize eternal things more, while earthly things are valued less, then I have been blessed. May every other one be alike blessed; for then, if they be reviled, they will not revile again, but be at peace with God, and live in charity with all mankind. This conclusion cannot be made tangible, but must be received like other truths. “By *faith* we understand that the *world was made*.” By faith alone shall we know its approaching end.

The apostle Paul told believers, 2 Thess. ii. 8, that the day of the Lord would not come till the lawless one should be revealed. That *one* has not only come, but, in the estimation of Christians generally, has had his day—therefore, instead of using that passage against, it becomes an impressive proof that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Jehovah gave warning of the flood—of the destruction of Sodom—of the destruction of Jerusalem—and why not of the destruction of Antichrist? Had he not given us warning, we should have been in darkness, in contradiction to 1 Thess. v. 4: “But ye, brethren, *are not in darkness*, that that day should overtake you as a thief.”

There are, to my mind, several indications

that that day is at hand; therefore I am bound, by every principle of reason and religion, to say so, and pray to be ready. The doom of the unfaithful servant, who said my Lord delayeth his coming, is enough to appal any one; Matt. xxiv. 50, 51. The company of those who inquire "where is the promise of his coming," is surely undesirable; 2 Pet. iii. 3. To sum it all up, allow me to say, "Let others do as they may, as for me and my house, we will," by aid of Divine grace, *look* for our blessed Lord, till he come. "If the vision tarry, we will wait," assured "it will surely come." As to the manner of waiting, it should be in the discharge of every duty; as it is written,—"*Occupy till I come.*" "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing." Amen!

Feb. 17th, 1843.

J. B. Cook.

LETTER TO N. HERVEY.

DEAR BROTHER HERVEY :—On my return from New Jersey, I found a very good letter from you. My gratitude to God for his goodness to me, as well as you, is expressed by my writing;—but O, how can I write the feelings of my heart! The blessed SEARCHER of hearts alone knows them. Human language is too poor to express them, even though it were entirely at my command. O, it seems as it never did before, that God has *my whole heart*. BLESSED be his holy name, forever and ever, amen!

If my heart were magnetized iron, and the Holy One the magnet, (excuse the figure,) it could hardly draw more powerfully than my Lord seems to draw out my

soul after himself. Yes, my heart, my whole heart, is drawn away from earth—from all trust in myself or in man. The Spirit leading me, I cannot, dare not, resist; yet my understanding was never more clear; never more disposed to consider well everything my *heart* believes and loves. My interest in the Second Advent began with a very sweet and holy, yet strong and melting influence, which inclined my mind to inquire into it, in August last. From that time my mind has been inquiring, and my heart somewhat restless. Indeed, neither has my intellect or heart been satisfied on those portions of Scripture relating to this doctrine, since I left Newton. Now my whole intellectual and moral nature *reposes* as if the truth is indeed *seen*. If this sentiment need illustration, let me say, that, on the subject of atonement, justification by faith, believers' baptism, &c., my mind is at rest. As it is written, "we who have *believed* do enter into *rest*," the heart *reposes* in a full belief of pure truth, as does a weary head on a pillow of down. ERROR never gives such peace as this. It may lull a person to sleep in *sin*, and leave him as destitute of devotion as of the Holy Ghost. "Hereby we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." I have seen some believe the Bible doctrine of the second coming of Messiah at hand, and they have been bathed with devotion—"baptized with the *Holy Ghost*." But others, of whom I entertained an equally good opinion in disbelieving, have lost all comfort in prayer, and been constrained to admit that they had yielded to the devil. This is a fact, whether my reasoning concerning it be right or not. But when I see such facts, in apparent illustration of established Scriptural principles, it is impossible for me to treat them lightly. You may see what truth I suppose to be explained by these facts, by reading 1 John iv. 1—5. The principle applies to the second advent as obviously as to the first. To believe just what God says, as little children, is to be blest,—truly blessed with the good Spirit. To disbelieve, is to grieve the Spirit and sin against God; nay, more, to yield to the spirit of Antichrist. To reject the coming One is to be antichrist.

I am too weary to write much, especially as it is late on Saturday evening. It was my purpose to have come to N., to see all I once knew, and tell them how great things the Lord has done for me. My desire is to see brothers N. and S., for whom I entertain a strong affection—Lord Jesus, bless them, and “open to them the Scriptures,” that their hearts may “burn within” them. I shall be there, Lord willing, soon. Your name is announced in N. Y.; can you not come this way? Do, and write me as long as possible beforehand.

How plain and pregnant with meaning is the leading petition in our Lord’s prayer, “*thy kingdom come.*” This I never understood till now. It is the kingdom seen by the prophet Daniel in vision, that will be the millennium, not of the imagination, but of God, and glorious beyond conception. The millennium which human imagination, aided by a spiritual interpretation of plain Scripture, has framed, the millennium which comprehended the man of sin, and the devil, and death,—more or less of all the ills which sin has originated, this millennium, instead of losing itself in the brightening glories of eternity, as does the millennium of the Bible, at the end of a thousand years, makes provision for the almost triumphant *reign of Satan*. O Lord, deliver us from such a millennium; thy will, and not mine, be done. When I went to New Jersey, I left my big Bible open, so that the eye of Mercy might see what I wished to be prayed continually, “Come, Lord Jesus, even so, *come quickly*. Amen! Grace be with thee. Amen!”

Yours, in hope of the better resurrection,

J. B. COOK.

Middletown, March 11th, 1843.

To the Editor of the Middletown Sentinel.

* * * * *

There are several points which I should like to touch, had I room to write, and you to print, one of which is

the oft-repeated inquiry, What will you do if the Lord does not come at the time expected? I answer, I shall have the satisfaction of *knowing, beyond all controversy*, that I “love his appearing”—also, that my soul is much richer in the experience of divine grace—that my views of Bible truth are greatly enlarged and improved, and that it is better “to be ready and not go,” than to be found among the unbelieving. But I am reproved when such language is used without explanation. I entertain no fear that the promise shall fail—neither will my conscience, or my Judge, ever cause a blush for *lifting up my head* and “*looking up*,” as he has directed, when my “*redemption draweth nigh*.” If shame ever mantles any face at the appearing of Christ, it will be the face of him, who, when he sees the truth, refuses, from some sinister motive, to avow it. If this subject does not appear to other minds as it does to mine, it does not affect *my* duty. Who would, who could blame an affectionate, afflicted wife for desiring the return of her husband, when she knew it would end her trials? It would be a shame to her not to expect him as soon as his letter authorized an expectation. Now I feel assured that our Lord has given us ground for expectation; hence I long for it more than for anything else. I love his coming with all my heart, and have a rich earnest of it, of which I am infinitely unworthy, and for which I would ever be devoutly thankful. Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.

Yours,

J. B. Cook.

To the Editor of The Midnight Cry.

“Allow me to say a word, through you, to those associated with you. Daniel learned by books that God would restore his people from captivity at the end of seventy years. Then he did not renounce all care, and say, If I am ready, it will make no difference. No. He made the promise of God the ground on which he threw himself, soul and body, and poured out an agony

of desire that it might be fulfilled. No one was ever more absorbed in supplication than the beloved prophet seems to have been, in view of a promise that was absolute. ‘*When seventy years are accomplished, I will punish the king of Babylon,*’ &c. How essential the prophet’s prayer was to the accomplishment of the divine promise, we are not told; yet we may be fully assured that he would not have been qualified to act the part assigned him had he been less prayerful. Now God has given us a greater promise, comprehending all the called, and the chosen, and the faithful,—a promise which, when fulfilled, will be hell’s discomfiture and heaven’s jubilee. And shall we not give ourselves to prayer as did Daniel? We have ‘learned by books’ that the days of ‘the little horn’ are numbered, ‘the last end of the indignation’ is just arrived, and the time that the saints shall possess ‘*the kingdom*’ is at hand; and I want to pray all the time, with all my heart, and soul, and mind, and strength—with every beating pulse I want to pray the effectual, fervent prayer, ‘*Come, Lord Jesus, even so, come quickly.*’ Amen! In this overwhelming prayer I want help—never did I feel myself so weak—never so much in need of strength to pour out my soul in believing, agonizing, unceasing supplication, ‘*Thy kingdom come!*’

“O Lord, when thou didst appear ‘*a child born,*’ there was but *one* Simeon and *one* Anna to welcome thee! Now, blessed Jesus, pour thy spirit upon all who love thine appearing. O let Zion travail in prayer, till thou shalt come in thy kingdom and appear in thy glory. Amen!

“When we are waiting, as Daniel waited for the termination of the captivity, we shall be blessed—thrice, and forever blessed. Then with joy we’ll welcome our descending Deliverer. O for prayer, the world over, that the sanctuary may be cleansed! Lord, fulfil thine own promise. Amen!”

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PRAYER OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

How long, O Lord our Savior,
 Wilt thou remain away?
 Our hearts are growing weary
 Of thy so long delay.
 O when shall come the moment
 When, brighter far than morn,
 The sunshine of thy glory
 Shall on thy people dawn?

How long, O gracious Master,
 Wilt thou thy household leave?
 So long hast thou now tarried,
 Few thy return believe.
 Immers'd in sloth and folly,
 Thy servants, Lord, we see;
 And few of us stand ready
 With joy to welcome thee.

How long, O heav'nly Bridegroom,
 How long wilt thou delay?
 And yet how few are grieving
 That thou dost absent stay?
 Thy very Bride her portion
 And calling hath forgot,
 And seeks for ease and glory
 Where thou, her Lord, art not.

O wake thy slumbering virgins;
 Send forth the solemn cry,
 Let all thy saints repeat it,
 "The Bridegroom draweth nigh."
 May all our lamps be burning,
 Our loins well girded be,
 Each longing heart preparing
 With joy thy face to see.

AND THEN SHALL THEY SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD WITH POWER

THINGS BEGIN TO COME TO PASS, THEN LOOK UP, AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS; FOR